



No relief ahead for city's taxpayers

Already socked with major increases in 2017, residents will see more taken out of their wallets

BY HAL DARDICK
Chicago Tribune

2017 was particularly hard on Chicago taxpayers, who were hit with a major state income tax hike, the latest in a series of property tax increases at City Hall and Chicago Public Schools, and a new city tax on water and sewer service.

Those looking for relief with the new year will be disappointed — the tax bite will continue in 2018. There's another round of property tax hikes and an increase in the water and sewer tax. On top of that, the city is raising the monthly 911 fee and a CTA fare hike is in store.

The vast bulk of the money raised will be spent on fixing

underfunded government worker pension systems that were at risk of going broke. It's a point Mayor Rahm Emanuel often raises, also noting that he's trying to end the practice of papering over Chicago's long-standing financial woes accrued under former Mayor Richard M. Daley. That, however, may be cold comfort to taxpayers now shouldering the burden.

Here's what to expect, and when:

■ The city property hike will come in July, when the second

installment of property tax bills goes out, with payments typically due Aug. 1. CPS property taxes are rising by \$224.5 million, with most of the money going into the Chicago Teachers' Pension Fund. City property taxes are going up another \$63 million — the fourth and final increase in Emanuel's plan to boost city contributions to pension funds for police officers and firefighters.

The property tax increases will be less than those in 2017. And thanks to a new, higher homeown-

ers' exemption state lawmakers approved at Emanuel's urging, many homeowners will get a bit of a break. Still, the average property tax increase for the owner of a \$250,000 home will be an estimated \$97. Owners of a home worth \$500,000 can expect a \$369 tax hike. That's because the larger homeowners' exemption shifts the burden of paying property taxes to higher-priced homes and commercial properties.

Turn to **Taxes, Page 2**

Tow truck driver, wife sentenced for bribery

City worker offered to return tourists' cars in exchange for cash

BY GREGORY PRATT
Chicago Tribune

The 39-year-old woman had been sightseeing in downtown Chicago, and when she returned to the spot where she had parked at Columbus and Balbo drives, not far from Buckingham Fountain, her vehicle was gone.

Looking for help, she flagged down a nearby tow truck from the city's Department of Streets and Sanitation. Driver Lennie Perry said he could help, officials said, and offered to return her car in exchange for \$150 — cash.

The woman said she didn't have the money, but Perry again offered help and directed her to his wife, Arica Reed-Perry, whose silver Chevy Impala was parked across the street. Reed-Perry took the woman to a nearby ATM, collected the cash and then dropped off the victim at her vehicle near Lake Street and Stetson Avenue, about a mile north of where it was originally parked, according to officials and court records.

Immediately, the woman contacted police, sparking an investigation into the September 2014 incident that culminated this week when Cook County Judge Lawrence Flood sentenced Perry to nine years behind bars, with three years of supervised release afterward, for his role in the bribery scheme, officials

Turn to **Bribery, Page 2**



TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Chris Adams, who started a collective of African-American filmmakers, films recently at a warehouse in Chicago's South Loop.

BLACK FILMMAKERS DREAM A NEW UNIVERSE

Collective makes sci-fi, fantasy, horror from African-American perspectives

BY LOLLY BOWEAN | Chicago Tribune

When Chris Adams was a teen growing up in the Far South Side's Roseland area, he would often imagine himself living in space and existing alongside alien creatures such as those in "Star Wars."

Or he would picture an alternate reality, where black people were served by robots and lived in houses filled with futuristic devices or battled enormous, prehistoric monsters.

"I've (long) been a big fan of fantasy films and horror and sci-fi," he said. "But black people are underrepresented in those genres. When we are there, we're the first to die."

Hoping to bring fresh voices and perspectives to film, Adams recently launched a project with a collective of Chicago filmmakers that concentrates on producing short movies.

Rather than giving voice to

the typical stories of violence, grief or family drama, these filmmakers want to showcase fantasy, horror and science fiction films with black characters as the focus.

Their effort comes at a time when there is an increasing appetite for films and television shows that present black lives from nuanced and non-stereotypical perspectives.

Still, Adams and his Paradi-

gm Grey project are unusual because the independent films center on black characters but have very little to do with the realities African-Americans experience. All five of the filmmakers and production crews involved in the group hail from the Chicago region and shoot their projects here, yet they avoid narratives centered on poverty, joblessness, drug abuse, corruption or

Turn to **Sci-fi, Page 4**

Inventor says teaching fractions is half-baked

Quest for decimal inch taken to pols, schools

BY JOHN KEILMAN
Chicago Tribune

Retired engineer and inventor Ed Evenson might have a 0.00001 chance of changing the way math is taught in Illinois, but you won't catch him giving a half-effort.

Evenson, of Rolling Meadows, says fractions are a confusing, unwieldy and imprecise system of measurement that American industry has wisely abandoned for a much better one: the decimal inch.

As the name suggests, a decimal inch is broken into tenths instead of sixteenths, making it simpler to measure objects and make calculations. Fractions, Evenson said, are ancient holdovers that have outlived their

purpose.

"Why would you want to use them?" he said. "Each mark on the ruler has a different name: There's $\frac{5}{16}$, $\frac{7}{8}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ and so on, whereas with a decimal it's just one-two-three-four-five, all the way up to 10. You can't go wrong. As long as you can count to 10, you've mastered it."

Evenson has self-published a treatise on the subject, "The Drive for the Decimal Inch," which he has mailed to numerous politicians and educators, hoping to persuade them to add the subject to elementary school math programs.

So far, though, he has made no converts, and when the Tribune presented his argument to mathematicians and curriculum direc-



ANTONIO PEREZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Retired engineer Ed Evenson self-published a treatise, "The Drive for the Decimal Inch," which he has mailed to politicians and educators.

tors, Team Fraction fired back with a vengeance.

"To say decimals are easier is superficially convincing," said Jordan Ellenberg, a math professor at the University of Wisconsin

at Madison. "But they're not so good if you're talking about something like $\frac{1}{3}$, which is 0.3333, repeating until infinity. All

Turn to **Fractions, Page 4**

Former Cubs closer Davis signs 3-year deal with Rockies

Chicago Sports



TONI GARRIGA/EFE

SUE GRAFTON
1940-2017

Writer of 'alphabet series' of mysteries

Sue Grafton, whose "Y is for Yesterday" was published in August, dies before writing a "Z" novel. **Nation & World, Page 6**

Northwestern wins Music City Bowl but loses star quarterback to knee injury **Chicago Sports**



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